

October 15, 1998

To the Employees of the Office of Ecosystems and Communities

Each of us plays an important part in moving the Office of Ecosystems and Communities (ECO) toward our goal in our day-to-day work. We have progressed in many areas over the three years since the inception of the office. Over the next two years I want ECO to become even better.

As we move into fiscal 1999 I want each of us to examine our work as we assemble our unit workplans and find ways to become more supportive and involved in fostering the goal and strategic directions of the Office. For some of you this examination may turn-up obvious and easy ways to advance the Office's goal and strategic directions. For others the connections may be less obvious and your contribution may require a fundamental evaluation of your work. I want each of you to critically examine your work to identify ways that you might better help advance the goal and strategic directions of this office.

I expect that unit plans for FY1999 and 2000 will reflect the results of your examinations. . . that they will identify new or better ways that you and your unit can foster the Office of Ecosystems and Communities work.

This brochure is our ECO Strategic Plan for FY 1999 and 2000. We have intentionally kept it brief so it can be used frequently to guide the work of each unit and our individual daily work. We will also use the plan to periodically evaluate our progress toward meeting our overall office goal.

Director

To achieve our goal we have identified six strategic directions to guide our work:

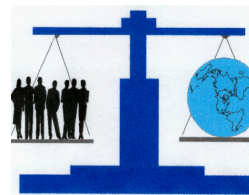
- ◆ **Use Whole Ecosystem Thinking.** Use ecosystems as the focus of our work and strive to develop protection and recovery strategies that deal with the needs and problems of a whole ecosystem rather than subparts of a system.
- ◆ **Ensure Equitable Implementation of Programs.** Set priorities and implement programs to ensure that our actions equitably represent and support the diverse communities and interests of Region 10.
- ◆ **Use a Community Based Approach.** Work with people in communities, enabling them to develop solutions to environmental problems within the local social, economic and natural setting. Often EPA's role will be to provide tools and assistance in ecological analysis, risk assessment, collaborative decision making, mediation, community involvement, and other areas to support community-based activities.
- ◆ **Uphold Tribal Trust Responsibilities.** Uphold our Federal Tribal Trust Responsibility by working with Tribes through a government to government relationship.
- ◆ **Strive to Integrate Government Work through Public Agency Partnerships.** Ensure that public voluntary, regulatory and enforcement programs implemented by EPA, tribes, states, and other federal agencies are integrated so that an appropriate combination of resources and approaches are used.
- ◆ **Use Public Involvement.** Ensure that the interested citizens in a community are involved and aware of the environmental issues and concerns in a community.

In addition to the actions and activities that individuals and units will identify to further the Office's goal and strategic directions we have established Office-level actions that will help us achieve our goal. Below is a list of those actions and the Unit (or process) assigned to lead them.



USE WHOLE ECOSYSTEM THINKING

- Develop guidance that defines the Ecosystem Approach and how to apply it in our unit work plans and our daily work. **Geographic Unit (GEO)**
- Make foundational education available for staff on the ecosystem approach, and ecological processes at all scales. **Education Team (EdT)**
- Provide a diverse perspective to staff, using speakers from many interest groups and backgrounds, to develop a better understanding of community and ecosystem. **EdT**



ENSURE EQUITABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS.

- Use community assistance grants, outreach opportunities and other approaches to ensure that the interests affected by ECO plans or actions, will have an opportunity to participate in the process. **Accountability System.**




USE A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH

- Update and implement the CBEP Strategy. **GEO**
- Develop a process to continually update office staff on geographic initiatives sharing lessons learned, good ideas, bad ideas, etc. **GEO**
- Sponsor an annual regional workshop for RGI coordinators, watershed coordinators and place based people to share experiences. **EdT**
- Develop/update/implement strategies for the current geographic priority areas: Columbia/Snake River mainstem, Puget Sound, Coeur d'Alene, Umatilla Basin, Columbia Plateau, Tillamook National Estuary, Forest Provinces. **GEO, Natural Resources Management Unit (NRMU)**
- Assign a CBEP coordinator to promote and nurture development of watershed councils and community action groups. Appoint an inter-unit steering committee to work with the CBEP coordinator, providing direction, input and assistance. **GEO**
- Provide training and promote application of watershed analysis tools and approaches. **EdT**
- Continue to implement the CBEP grant program (expand it to all four states). **GEO**
- Assess the effectiveness of place-basing staff and reach a decision on whether to expand our place-based assignments. **Office Director**



USE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- Make outreach training similar to the outreach certification course available to all office staff. **OU**
 - Develop and implement community relations plans and/or communication strategies for community efforts, as appropriate. **Accountability System.**
 - At the Office level, develop a speaker's board and a tracking system to respond to requests for speakers. **Administrative Staff**
 - Outreach Unit to work with other ECO units to develop unit outreach plans and to understand and utilize OU assistance. **ARU, GEO, NRMU, PEST, OU**
 - Include all ECO public events on the Regional Outreach Calendar. **ARU, GEO, NRMU, PEST, OU**
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- ## UPHOLD TRIBAL TRUST RESPONSIBILITIES
- Work with Tribal Office to provide guidance to staff. **EdT**
 - Dedicate and track resources to work with tribes in a government to government relationship. **Outreach Unit (OU)**
 - Utilize traditional and contemporary tribal knowledge to assist with restoring and managing ecological systems. **All/Accountability System**
 - Coordinate with the Tribal Office to provide input to Tribal Environmental Agreements (TEA) and Performance Partnership Agreements(PPA). **OU**
 - Work with Federal, State, local and private entities to ensure that actions/decisions are consistent with our tribal trust responsibilities. **All/Accountability System**



and others..

STRIVE TO INTEGRATE GOVERNMENT WORK THROUGH PUBLIC AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

- Develop a concise summary of the Office's responsibilities and commitments under GPRA, the Clean Water Action Plan, and the Aquatic Ecosystem Protection Strategy. Ensure that the Unit Plans and where appropriate the Office Strategy address those responsibilities and commitments. **GEO**
- Pesticides Unit (PEST) and NRMU develop a joint strategy for using Pesticides regulatory tools in ecosystem recovery efforts and NRMU tools in Pesticide Program efforts. **PEST, NRMU**
- Aquatic Resources Unit (ARU) and NRMU work with geographic based staff to merge and coordinate 319, 104(b)(3), EQUIP, WCP, and CRP programs and funding. **ARU, NRMU**
- Develop PPAs with states. Include other partners in order to integrate other funding/planning efforts such as EQUIP, Wetlands Conservation Planning, 319, 104(b)(3), etc. **Office Director**
- Develop joint goals and objectives with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Office of Environmental Assessment (OEA) and Office of Water (OW) to ensure a consistent message to achieve compliance with the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Work with each other to the point where we are knowledgeable about each other's programs. **Office Director**
- Through geographic and program staff identify and focus potential enforcement in key targeted areas. **GEO, PEST, NRMU**
- Implement pesticides and wetlands enforcement activities through enhanced relationships with other regulatory agencies. **PEST, ARU**
- NEPA Team work with place-based staff, NRMU, PEST and ARU to ensure that NEPA tools are fully integrated in ecosystem recovery efforts. **GEO, NRMU, PEST, ARU**

Office of Ecosystems and Communities

Strategic Directions and Actions FY1999 and 2000

October 1998

Our goal . . .

To restore and protect the environment for naturally functioning ecosystems and healthy human communities



USEPA Region 10
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